**Department of Anthropology**
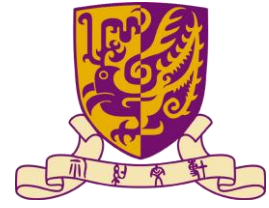**The Chinese University of Hong Kong**
**Bachelor, University GE Course**
**First term**
**Academic Year 2023-2024**

# China Today 今日中國

## UGEA 2334

*General Outline and Instructions*



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| **Course instructor** | Dr Hang Kei Ho, Adjunct Associate Professor |
| **Contact email** | hang.kei.ho@cuhk.edu.hk |
| **Course units** | 3.00 |
| **Level** | Bachelor |
| **Language** | English |
| **Course restrictions** | Not for Anthropology Majors; and students who have taken ANTH2410, UGEA2180 or 2190. Co-requisite: Any course with "UGFH" or "UGFN" as prefix. |
| **Office hours** | By appointment |
| **Version** | 13 September 2023 |

*Please note that this document aims to provide a general overview of the course. The assessment, lecture titles, and readings are subject to change.*

# Course description

Since adopting the Open Door Policy in 1978, the Chinese government has transformed China into becoming one of the most significant global powers. This course delves into the key themes presented by leading scholars who have contributed to the critical debates surrounding contemporary China. Special emphasis is placed on critically analysing the role of humanities and social sciences, particularly anthropology, in the current academic discussions. The course covers a wide range of topics, including theories and case studies in business management, development studies, digital society, environmentalism, globalisation, public health, pandemic management strategies, gender and labour, popular culture, urban consumption, inequality and the super-rich, poverty, and so on. Above all, this course critically examines China's role as a global leader both within its borders and on the international stage.

# Timetable

| Session | Date | Time | Theme | Activity |
|---------|------|------|-------|----------|
| 1 | 08/09/2023 | 14:30-16.15 | Introduction | Lecture 1 |
| 2 | 15/09/2023 | 14:30-16.15 16:30-17.15 | Globalising China | Lecture 2 Tutorial 2 |
| 3 | 22/09/2023 | 14:30-16.15 16:30-17.15 | Economic development | Lecture 3 Tutorial 3 |
| 4 | 29/09/2023 | 14:30-16.15 16:30-17.15 | Family, kinship, and business management | Lecture 4 Tutorial 4 |
| 5 | 06/10/2023 | 14:30-16.15 16:30-17.15 | Pandemic and public health | Lecture 5 Tutorial 5 |
| 6 | 13/10/2023 | 14:30-16.15 16:30-17.15 | Consuming China | Lecture 6 Tutorial 6 |
| 7 | 20/10/2023 | 14:30-16.15 16:30-17.15 | Inequality and the super-rich | Lecture 7 Tutorial 7 |
| 8 | 27/10/2023 | 14:30-16.15 16:30-17.15 | Development and South-South corporation | Lecture 8 Tutorial 8 |
| 9 | 03/11/2023 | 14:30-16.15 16:30-17.15 | Poverty | Lecture 9 Tutorial 9 |
| 10 | 10/11/2023 | 14:30-16.15 16:30-17.15 | Labour, gender, and sexuality | Lecture 10 Tutorial 10 |
| 11 | 17/11/2023 | 14:30-16.15 16:30-17.15 | Big data and digital society | Lecture 11 Tutorial 11 |
| 12 | 24/11/2023 | 14:30-16.15 16:30-17.15 | Sustainability and the green growth | Lecture 12 Tutorial 12 |
| 13 | 01/12/2023 | 14:30-16.15 16:30-17.15 | Group presentation and conclusion | Presentation workshop |

## Learning outcomes

To successfully complete this course, students shall demonstrate the ability to:

1. critically assess and engage with theoretical and empirical academic literature concerning contemporary China, employing insights from anthropological studies and other relevant academic disciplines.
2. critically assess, evaluate, and summarise policies and other related issues that are at the core of debates concerning contemporary China, and establish connections with the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
3. develop well-supported explanations and judgments on various topics concerning contemporary China, and to communicate findings through in-class discussions.
4. collaborate in groups and present findings on assigned topics to peers.
5. compose an argumentative academic paper based on a thorough literature review and secondary data collection.

## Rough outline of the course

- Each session will be divided into two parts: a lecture and a tutorial.
- Prior to each session, students are expected to thoroughly read the assigned literature and prepare notes for class discussion.
- Students may be required to work in groups and take on the role of leading tutorial discussions.
- This course involves conducting two case study analyses, where students will work in small groups. They will present their findings through two presentations.
- Students must submit a 2,000-word essay by the end of the course. Submission will be done via Blackboard, and the deadline will be confirmed.
- Completion of all assignments are mandatory.
- All assignments must be delivered in English.

## Assessment

The quality of the work will be graded as below:

| Grade | Overall course |
| --- | --- |
| A | Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes. |
| A- | Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes. |
| B | Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. |
| C | Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses. |
| D | Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes. |
| F | Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements. |

The final grade will be based on:

1. 10% class performance
    a. This is an evaluation of the quality of your participation in the sessions. Grades for your participation are based on your individual performance. We expect you to contribute positively and constructively to each session.
    b. You may also be asked to work in groups and take on the role of leading tutorial discussions.
2. 15% mini-presentation
    a. Working in small groups, this short presentation aims to provide students with the opportunity to collaborate on a small case study. Further details will be discussed in Lecture 1.
2. 35% group presentation
    a. Working in small groups, the aim of the presentation, scheduled for Session 13, is to assess students on their understanding of the academic literature related to a chosen subject on contemporary China, and their ability to connect the theories covered throughout the course with practical examples.
    b. Additionally, this assessment format aims to evaluate students' capacity to collaborate effectively and deliver the material in an engaging and professional manner during the verbal presentation.
3. 40% individual essay
    a. This essay, comprising 2,000 words ± 5% (excluding references), serves as an academically written embodiment of the position you may have orally defended during the group presentation. For instance, students who presented a case study orally should write a paper that utilises this specific case to advocate for the broader position defended in the presentation.
    b. It is expected that there may be some overlap amongst papers, as each one, regardless of its specific aim, should include a contextualising introduction, a body that draws on a range of literature to present a well-structured and thoroughly researched argument, and a conclusion that ties together the threads of the argument. However, each student is required to write their paper individually.
    c. The grading will take into account the quality of argumentation, knowledge and understanding of the relevant literature, and the overall quality of writing. Your essay should include a minimum of 10 academic references. Please note that essays exceeding or falling short of the word limit will not be graded.

Students who miss the presentation sessions will need to arrange for a replacement assignment with the course leader in order to pass. It is the student's responsibility to contact the course leader regarding the replacement assignment.

## Feedback for evaluation

Course and teaching evaluation survey will be conducted in the second last week of the course. Students are reminded of their responsibility and right to give feedback to facilitate enhancement of the course.

Students are welcome to give feedback to the course leader at any time in person or through emails.

## Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at:
http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/.

With each assignment, students are required to submit a signed declaration (https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_(2013-14)/p10.htm) that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via **VeriGuide**, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

## Rules

Students are expected to arrive on time to class and to not leave early unless prior arrangements have been made with the course instructor.

No audio recording or video recording is allowed in both the lectures and tutorials without permission. This is to ensure students can openly discuss their ideas.

Please behave appropriately during class and show respect towards others; any forms of bullying, discrimination, harassment, or violence will not be tolerated.

## *Lecture 1: Introduction*

We aim to begin this course by introducing the general debates surrounding the social, economic, and historical context of China, and their relevance to the broader discussion on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Additionally, we will explore the course assignments and format.

**Recommended reading:**

- Yu, S., Sial, M. S., Tran, D. K., Badulescu, A., Thu, P. A., & Sehleanu, M. (2020). Adoption and Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in China-Agenda 2030. *Sustainability*, *12*(15), 6288.

## *Lecture 2: Globalising China*

This lecture aims to delve into various paradigms of thinking about China and the world, employing terms such as the 'West and the Rest' to facilitate our debates.

**Required readings:**

- Artner, A. (2020). Can China lead the change of the world?. *Third World Quarterly*, *41*(11), 1881-1899.
- Nederveen Pieterse, J. (2015). China's contingencies and globalisation, *Third World Quarterly*, 36:11, 1985-2001.
- Trindade d'Ávila Magalhães, D. (2018). The globaliser dragon: how is China changing economic globalisation?. *Third World Quarterly*, *39*(9), 1727-1749.

**Recommended reading:**

- Nederveen Pieterse, J. (2012). Periodizing globalization: Histories of globalization, *New Global Studies* 6, 2: 1-25.

## *Lecture 3: Economic development*

Internal and external conflicts that occurred in China during the nineteenth century led to its decline for more than a century. Nonetheless, this lecture will explore China's economic development since the late 1970s and how it has re-emerged as one of the most significant global powers.

**Required readings:**

- Arestis, P., Karagiannis, N. & Lee, S. The economic growth of China: enabling politico-institutional and socio-cultural factors. *Review of Evolutionary Political Economy* 2, 339–358 (2021).

- Ma, L. J. (2005). Urban administrative restructuring, changing scale relations and local economic development in China. *Political Geography*, *24*(4), 477-497.
- Smart, A., & Hsu, J. Y. (2004). The Chinese diaspora, foreign investment and economic development in China. *The Review of International Affairs*, *3*(4), 544-566.
- Yeung, H. W. C. (2012). East Asian Capitalisms and Economic Geographies. In *The Wiley-Blackwell companion to economic geography* by T.J. Barnes et al (Eds), pp. 118-131.

## *Lecture 4: Family, kinship, and business management*

Family values and the concept of kinship hold significant importance in Chinese society. Moreover, some of these values have been translated into management styles and business practices. This lecture aims to explore diverse management philosophies through various business models and case studies.

**Required readings:**

- Jacka, T., Kipnis, A. B., & Sargeson, S. (2013). *Contemporary China: Society and social change.* Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, pp. 27-46.
- Ip, P. K. (2009). Is Confucianism Good for Business Ethics in China? *Journal of Business Ethics, 88*(3), 463-476. doi:10.1007/s10551-009-0120-2
- Cheung, C., & Chan, A. (2005). Philosophical Foundations of Eminent Hong Kong Chinese CEO's Leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics, 60*(1), 47-62.

## *Lecture 5: Pandemic and public health*

The COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as the most extensively discussed topic since its first occurrence in late 2019 in China. Its impact has been unprecedented, affecting the lives of billions and posing significant challenges to the conventional understanding of globalisation and public health. This lecture aims to foster a lively and contested discussion, encouraging active participation from students.

**Required readings:**

- Barlow, P., van Schalkwyk, M. C., McKee, M., Labonté, R., & Stuckler, D. (2021). COVID-19 and the collapse of global trade: building an effective public health response. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, *5*(2), e102-e107.
- Ho, H.K. (2020) COVID-19 Pandemic Management Strategies and Outcomes in East Asia and the Western World: The Scientific State, Democratic Ideology, and Social Behavior. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 5:575588.

## *Lecture 6: Consuming China*

The rapid rise of the middle-class and super-rich in China has significantly contributed to the surge in consumption of luxury goods and services. Moreover, many Chinese individuals have cultivated sophisticated cultural capital. The lecture explores how the Chinese are not just consumers but also financial backers, significantly influencing the design and delivery processes of global fashion and beverage trends.

**Required readings:**

- Ho, H. K. (2021). Twenty-first Century Wine Consumption Trends in East Asia: History, Luxury, and Transformation, *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change*, 6(2), 12.
- Li, G. C. (2021). From parvenu to "highbrow" tastes: The rise of cultural capital in China's intergenerational elites. *The British Journal of Sociology*, *72*(3), 514-530.

## *Lecture 7: Inequality and the super-rich*

Rapid industrialisation and the tech boom in China have given rise to a significant number of super-rich individuals. This lecture explores the recent academic framing of the super-rich concerning inequality within the academic sphere and the public domain.

**Required readings:**

- Lu, P., Fan, X., & Fu, F. (2021). Profile of the super rich in China: A social space analysis. *The British Journal of Sociology*, *72*(3), 543-565.
- Wissink, B., Koh, S. Y., & Forrest, R. (2017). Tycoon city: Political economy, real estate and the super-rich in Hong Kong. In *Cities and the super-rich: Real estate, elite practices and urban political economies* (pp. 229-252). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.

## *Lecture 8: Development and South-South corporation*

This lecture will look at China's foreign economic development strategies such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and how they have influenced development in Africa, and the world at large.

**Required readings:**

- Alden, C., & Jiang, L. (2019). Brave new world: debt, industrialization and security in China-Africa relations. *International Affairs*, *95*(3), 641-657.
- Huang, P. C. C. (2020). A New Integrative Vision: China's Belt-Road Initiative and Its Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. *Modern China*, *46*(5), 463–489.

- Huang, Y. (2016). Understanding China's Belt & Road initiative: motivation, framework and assessment. *China Economic Review*, *40*, 314-321.
- Jenkins, R. (2022). China's Belt and Road Initiative in Latin America: What has Changed?. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, *51*(1), 13-39.
- Woods, N. (2008). Whose aid? Whose influence? China, emerging donors and the silent revolution in development assistance. *International affairs*, *84*(6), 1205-1221.

## *Lecture 9: Poverty*

China surprised the world with its successful efforts to lift millions of people out of poverty. This lecture introduces different ways of conceptualising and assessing poverty from a global perspective, along with the associated challenges.

**Required readings:**

- Chen, S., & Ravallion, M. (2021). Reconciling the conflicting narratives on poverty in China. *Journal of Development Economics*, *153*, 102711.
- Hallegatte, S., & Rozenberg, J. (2017). Climate change through a poverty lens. *Nature Climate Change*, 7(4), 250-256.
- Selwyn, B. (2019). Poverty chains and global capitalism. *Competition & Change*, *23*(1), 71-97.

## *Lecture 10: Labour, gender, and sexuality*

The economic development in China would not have been possible without a thriving labour force. However, the imbalance in sex ratio originated from the one-child policy has impacted the society at a much larger scale. This lecture will discuss the complex notions of sex ratio, sexuality, and work from multiple perspectives.

**Required readings:**

- Hoang, K. K. (2015). New Hierarchies of Global Men. In *Dealing in desire: Asian ascendancy, western decline, and the hidden currencies of global sex work*. Berkeley: University of California Press. pp. 53-77.
- Williams, W. M., & Ceci, S. J. (2015). National hiring experiments reveal 2:1 faculty preference for women on STEM tenure track. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112(17), 5360-5365.
- Yuk-ha Tsang, E. (2020). Being bad to feel good: China's migrant men, displaced masculinity, and the commercial sex industry. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 29(122), 221-237.

## *Lecture 11: Big data and digital society*

The lecture explores the dynamic landscape of digital society through the intricacies of surveillance, mobile technology, and big data in China.

- Bolsover, G. (2018). Slacktivist USA and authoritarian China? Comparing two political public spheres with a random sample of social media users. *Policy & Internet*, *10*(4), 454-482.
- Jiang, M., & Fu, K. W. (2018). Chinese social media and big data: big data, big brother, big profit?. *Policy & Internet*, *10*(4), 372-392.
- Liang, F., Das, V., Kostyuk, N., & Hussain, M. M. (2018). Constructing a data-driven society: China's social credit system as a state surveillance infrastructure. *Policy & Internet*, *10*(4), 415-453.
- Liu, H., Fang, C., & Sun, S. (2017). Digital inequality in provincial China. *Environment and Planning A*, *49*(10), 2179-2182.

## *Lecture 12: Sustainability and the green growth*

China has made notable progress in developing various green technologies over the last decade. Specifically, China aims to become a major player in the advancement of green energy and sustainable growth. This lecture will explore how China is at the forefront of this significant development.

**Required readings:**

- Blah Luo, S., Yimamu, N., Li, Y., Wu, H., Irfan, M., & Hao, Y. (2023). Digitalization and sustainable development: How could digital economy development improve green innovation in China?. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, *32*(4), 1847-1871.
- O'Meara, S. (2020). China's plan to cut coal and boost green growth. *Nature*, *584*, S1-S3.
- Song, W., & Yu, H. (2018). Green innovation strategy and green innovation: The roles of green creativity and green organizational identity. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, *25*(2), 135-150.

## *Lecture 13: Group presentation and conclusion*

Students will be divided into groups and tasked with delivering a presentation on a given topic related to the themes covered in this course. Additionally, students are encouraged to provide feedback to their peers. Further details about the presentation will be provided as we progress through the course. In this session, we will also summarise all the topics covered in the course and conclude our discussion.